

Amendments to the Claims:

Claims 2, 9-18, 20, and 28 have been canceled. Claims 1, 3, 4, 7, 8, 19, 21, and 22 have been amended. Claims 1, 3 - 8, 19, and 21 - 27 are pending

Listing of the Claims:

Listing of Claims

1. (Amended) A method for inspecting an end surface of an optical connector, ~~the connector including a housing holding an optical ferrule with an optical fiber~~, the method comprising:
 - (a) providing an inspection machine having a connector receipt aperture and a fixture defining a slot; the slot having first and second sides and an end edge between the first and second sides;
 - (b) releasably securing the optical connector to a cage member including an extending flange; the optical connector including a housing holding an optical ferrule with an optical fiber; and
 - (c) mounting the optical connector with the cage member secured thereto into the inspection machine by:
 - (i) orienting the optical connector with the cage member to position the extending flange within the slot between the first and second sides of the fixture, and inserting the end surface of the optical connector into the connector receipt aperture.
2. (Canceled)
3. (Amended) A method according to claim 2 1 wherein:

- (a) said step of providing an inspection machine includes providing an inspection machine with a fixture defining a slot having void, wherein the void comprises a slot defining a first width; and
- (b) said step of releasably securing the optical connector to a cage member includes securing a cage member having an extending flange; the flange defining a second width;
 - (i) the first width being no more than 0.25% larger than the second width.

4. (Amended) A method according to claim 2 1 wherein:

- (a) said step of releasably securing the optical connector to a cage member includes securing the optical connector to a cage member having a frame and a latch arrangement extending from the frame;
 - (i) the frame defining a receiving chamber having a longitudinal axis; and
 - (ii) the extending flange being cantilevered from the frame and oriented generally normal to the longitudinal axis of the receiving chamber.

5. (Original) A method according to claim 4 wherein:

- (a) said step of releasably securing the optical connector to a cage member includes:
 - (i) inserting the optical connector into the receiving chamber; and
 - (ii) latching the cage member to the optical connector with the latch arrangement.

6. (Original) A method according to claim 5 wherein:

- (a) said step of inserting the optical connector into the receiving chamber includes aligning the optical connector with guiding ribs projecting from the frame into the receiving chamber.

7. (Amended) A method according to claim 5 further including:

- (a) after said step of mounting the optical connector into the inspection machine, unmounting the optical connector from the inspection machine by:

- (i) removing the end surface of the optical connector from the connector receipt aperture; and
- (ii) removing the extending flange of the cage member from the fixture slot void; and

(b) after said step of unmounting the optical connector from the inspection machine, removing the cage member from the optical connector by releasing the latch arrangement from the optical connector.

8. (Amended) A method according to claim 2 1 wherein:

- (a) said step of providing an inspection machine having a connector receipt aperture and a fixture defining a void slot includes mounting the fixture with the slot void onto the inspection machine.

9-18. (Canceled)

19. (Amended) A kit for use with an inspection machine for inspecting an end surface of an optical connector, the connector including a housing holding an optical ferrule with an optical fiber; the kit comprising:

- (a) a plate constructed and arranged to be mounted on the inspection machine; said plate having an edge;
 - (i) said edge defining a receiving void; and
 - (ii) said receiving void comprising a slot having first and second sides and an end edge;
 - (A) said first and second sides being perpendicular to said plate edge;
 - (B) said end edge extending between said first and second sides;
 - (C) said end edge being spaced from said plate edge by at least 0.1 inch; and
- (b) a cage member constructed and arranged to receive the optical connector; said cage member including an extending flange;
 - (i) said extending flange being sized to project into and be received by the receiving void of the plate.

20. (Canceled)

21. (Amended) A kit according to claim 20 19 wherein:

- (a) said plate includes a pair of apertures sized to receive fasteners to secure said plate to the inspection machine;
 - (i) said slot being centered between said pair of apertures.

22. (Amended) A kit according to claim 20 19 wherein:

- (a) said cage member includes a frame defining an optical connector receiving chamber having a longitudinal axis;
 - (i) said flange being cantilevered from said frame and oriented generally normal to said longitudinal axis
- (b) a latch assembly; said latch assembly extending from said frame and positioned adjacent to said receiving chamber.

23. (Original) A kit according to claim 22 wherein:

- (a) said flange includes a pair of parallel sides terminating at a free end;
 - (i) said flange parallel sides being received within said slot between said first and second sides of said slot.

24. (Original) A kit according to claim 23 wherein:

- (a) said slot has a first width extending between said slot first and second sides; and
- (b) said flanges has a second width, extending between said flange parallel sides;
 - (i) the first width being no more than 0.25% of the second width.

25. (Original) A kit according to claim 22 wherein:

- (a) said latch assembly on said cage member extends from said frame in a direction generally parallel to said longitudinal axis; and said latch assembly includes first and second spaced latch members; each of the first and second latch members having an extension projecting from said frame having a hook construction; and

- (b) said cage member further includes first and second guide ribs projecting from said frame into said receiving chamber;
 - (i) said first and second guide ribs opposing each other within said receiving chamber.

26. (Original) A fixture for use with an inspection machine for inspecting an end surface of an optical connector, the connector including a housing holding an optical ferrule with an optical fiber; the fixture comprising:

- (a) a plate; said plate including:
 - (i) a flat, planar mounting surface;
 - (ii) a front edge;
 - (A) said edge defining a receiving void;
 - (B) said receiving void including an open slot having first and second sides and an end edge;
 - (1) said end edge extending between said first and second sides; said first and second sides being perpendicular to said end edge and said front edge; said end edge being parallel to said front edge; and
 - (2) said end edge being spaced from said front edge by at least 0.1 inch.

27. (Original) A fixture according to claim 26 wherein:

- (a) said plate further includes at least one mounting aperture extending therethrough.

28. (Canceled)